



EDITORIALS

The Vigilante: Hero Or Villain?

Americans love a hero, almost any kind of a hero, because they symbolize individual effort, individual achievement, courage or bravery, all characteristics of individualism and the competitive spirit. In the nation's larger cities, where crime is rampant and many people live in constant fear for their personal safety, hero worship is one way to help people overcome or at least temporarily forget their fears.

The athlete, the fireman who rescues a child from a burning building, the entertainer who contributes money to a worthy cause, the priest who prevents an insane person from taking his life, the person who demonstrates honesty by returning a large sum of lost money, these are all hero types. However, the greatest American heroes, magnified by fictional television and movies are those who prevent a crime in some heroic fashion.

The hero worship mentality took a big leap forward recently when New York City residents applauded its latest hero - a subway passenger who shot four youths who were harassing him and attempting to rob him using screwdrivers with sharp points as weapons of intimidation. One of the youths was shot in the spine and will never be able to walk again.

In a most unusual occurrence, the hero gunman helped two women to find other seats on the train after falling to the floor to avoid the gun fire. He also calmly told the train conductor what had happened and quietly walked off the train and the scene of the shooting.

For the 3.4 million New Yorkers who must ride the subway daily, about half of the city's population, there is a full awareness that the subway's long walking tunnels are often used as hiding places for muggers, rapists and robbers. For example, from January through November in 1984 there were 5,458 robberies or attempted robberies and eight homicides in the New York subway system. Widespread knowledge of these facts and big media co-

verage of many of these crimes cause many subway riders to live in daily fear for their lives upon entering the subway.

It was out of this background that New Yorkers applauded the shooting of the four 18 and 19 year old youths. Thomas Repetto, president of the Citizens' Crime Commission of New York, probably best summarized the feelings of many New Yorkers when he said, "People are fed up with being victimized by criminals. I think the sentiment is that the fellow probably did wrong but should not be punished severely." At the other end of the debate, a Manhattan subway rider said, "I certainly don't think he (the gunman) should be convicted of any crime at all. If I had a gun, I'd have done the same thing."

New York Mayor Ed Koch, Police Commissioner Ben Ward and Gov. Mario Cuomo quickly denounced vigilante justice. Koch then mobilized an extra 1,300 policemen in a search for the gunman whom some had compared to a movie called "Death Wish" which portrays a similar modern-day vigilante.

Undoubtedly the sympathy expressed for the gunman, the offers of money to defend him in court, and offers to post bail money led Bernhard Goetz, a 37 year old, self-employed engineer, to turn himself into the authorities as the professed gunman. Goetz had been mugged four years earlier on the subway.

Ironically, Goetz refused all offers of financial assistance. Ironically, too, many New Yorkers wonder why the mayor mobilized 1,300 policemen to hunt down a man who sought to protect himself but the same force was not there to protect subway riders from the very thing that Mr. Goetz was defending himself against. Ironically also is the fact that Mr. Goetz's self-defense and its wide publicity may have a deterrent effect on criminal acts at least for a while, if so, it will have accomplished something that the police apparently have not been able to do.

Local Government: Best Choice

Local government - city and county - is the people's best choice for the effective and best decision makers in the use of their tax dollars, according to a survey on governments and taxes released by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

A Gallup poll conducted for ACIR in May, 1984, revealed that local government gets a 35 percent preference rating, compared to 27 percent for state government and 24 percent for the federal government. Another 14 percent of those surveyed gave no opinion.

The approval rating for local government's use of taxpayers' dollars is the highest since ACIR began its annual survey in 1972.

Significantly, in past years, and to some

extent today, many people, especially minorities, would be concerned about this shift because it has been only by the force of federal law and the regulations attached to many federally funded programs that minorities and poor communities have received a fair share of the benefits of such programs.

Furthermore, at all levels of government, there remains a need to reassess the nation's tax policies to better assure a more equitable taxing policy. Interestingly, too, those people in the population, usually the poor, who too often don't vote don't have an impact and influence upon the tax-use decision makers. Voting will best assure how our taxes are used.

From Capitol Hill

Administrative Blacks Left Holding "The Bag"

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

The press has recently reported statements made by Clarence Pendleton, Chairman of the Civil Rights Commission, Steven Rhodes, Assistant to Vice President Bush, and Clarence Thomas, Chairman of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). These men criticized blacks for voicing their opposition to Mr. Reagan's assault on civil rights, and now they are spewing out their venom on blacks because of the "Free Africa Movement" protest.

Both chairmen strongly denounced black leaders for not trying to work with the President. Black leaders and all civil rights groups have tried, unsuccessfully, to work with the Administration on enforcing civil rights mandates of both the Congress and the courts, while Mr. Reagan has been working diligently to overturn these civil rights gains.

Both Pendleton and Thomas are supporting the Administration's position against busing. In most cases busing has worked well. Examples are Norfolk, Va., where busing has worked marvelously for more than a decade, but the Administration is attempting to upset the system and return it to segregation of schools. The people in Charlotte, N.C., told the President that he was wrong in denouncing busing for integration in their city, because since busing their schools have improved.

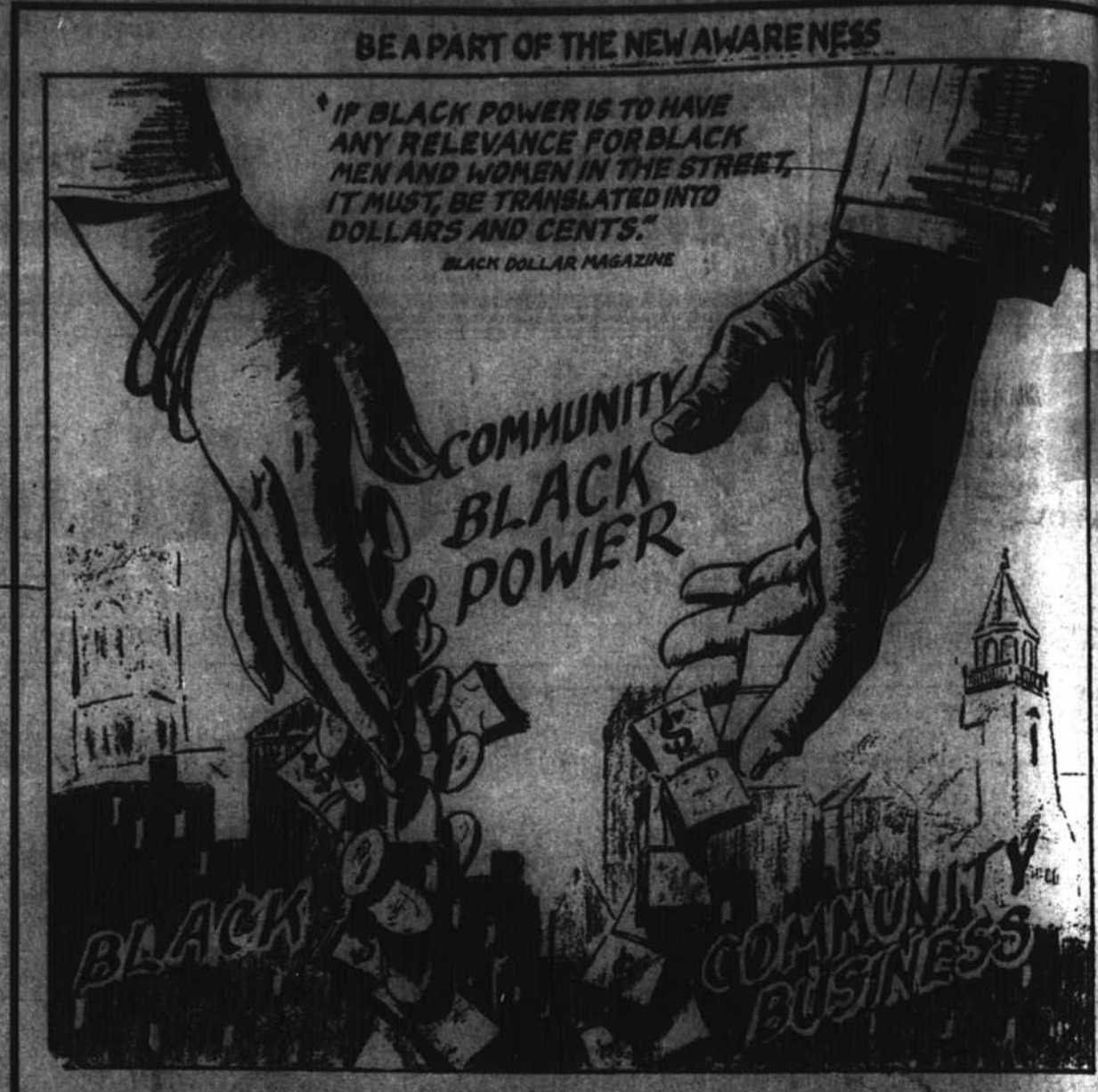
Thomas said, "What black leaders have successfully done is they have essentially disenfranchised blacks." Thomas is painting blacks as an unintelligent group of people who don't realize their deplorable plight unless someone else tells them. Eddie Williams, President of



Alfreda L. Madison

the Joint Center for Political Studies, stated in the Washington Post that statistics gathered by the Gallup Poll showed that "like many white leaders, black leaders in fact seem to be following more than leading."

The Washington Post article said these three Reagan appointments sense a lack of attention to ongoing budget and tax deliberations from black leaders distracted by mushrooming South Africa demonstrations. Do they feel that blacks can work on domestic policies at one time and foreign policies at another? Why can't they simultaneously work on both at the same period? What about whites who voice opinions and take a stand on both policies at the same time? They haven't spoken out against the whites who are taking part in the demonstrations, even including conservative congressmen who have a very strongly worded letter against South Africa's apartheid, even including consideration of sanctions against South Africa and also stating that Mr. Reagan's constructive engagement policy is not working. These three blacks have been advocating the President's



Church Members...And Apartheid

..Sabrin's column, "Scope," will return to this space next week.

Black dues-paying members of predominantly white religious denominations should pay careful attention to what their money supports at the international level. The present anti-apartheid protest in South Africa, inspired by Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu is yet another sign to blacks that corporate America is linked tightly to the continuing oppression of their people in that country.

Many large white religious bodies are still investing in corporations with ties, directly or indirectly, to a system which denies blacks both civil and human rights.

Recognizing the right of members to know where their money goes, the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ (UCC) recently released a report from its Social Responsibility in Investments Office, outlining the actions taken by its national boards to attack apartheid at the corporate level.

As a reinforcement for the report and as a guide to individuals, local churches



Sabrina

and regional conferences of the denomination, the research included the findings of the board's survey of the 24 largest international U.S. banks' lending policies to South Africa. Purpose of the survey was to identify financial institutions that deposit funds and maintain accounts with that racist government and thereby discourage investments in the offenders.

Results of the survey were helpful to people and institutions strongly opposing apartheid. The majority of the banks stated that their policies prohibit lending money to the public sector in South Africa and these restrictions will continue until the country changes its ra-

cist treatment of non-white. Among the dissenters, Citibank continues full banking operations with branches in South Africa and North Carolina National Bank has small office there.

A critical issue addressed by the Social Responsibility in Investments Office is U.S. corporate involvement in security-related activities in South Africa's government. This requirement, established by law in 1980, is one of the country's toughest responses to the possibility of worker uprisings or sabotage. It allows the government to designate corporate property "strategic key points," which must plan an adopt security measures.

All-white militias to protect the plants are important parts of the basic security plans. Further, major concerns arise from the in position of security-related activities. Will they involve U.S. citizens in South Africa's civil disturbances? Should employees of U.S. companies be forced to carry weapons in the interest of the government?

A survey conducted by UCC boards of 22 leading U.S. corporations operating in South Africa revealed that four oil companies included in the boards' portfolio declined to answer the question regarding designation "National Key Point." Texaco, Standard Oil of California, Mobil and Exxon remained silent.

On the positive side, two companies, General Motors, and Xerox, have agreed to abide by the conditions set by Bishop Tutu in his role of general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Neither, however, has been willing to make public statements.

The UCC's progress in getting information from 24 major corporations in their portfolios regarding commitments to human rights in overseas operations related to exports has been painfully slow. Honeywell, Burroughs, American Can Co., AMP, Inc., Amdahl Corp. and Singer had not replied by October, 1984.

Whites in the country will continue to earn four times as much as blacks. The government will get away with spending \$87 per black student, compared to \$650 for each white. Blacks will still need permission to live, work and walk where they choose. Equal rights in public accommodations will be denied in the simplest forms - buses, trains, hotels and restaurants.

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